

APR 07 2008

File Code: 1950-3

Date: April 3, 2008

Ravalli County Commissioners

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Dear Interested Party,

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Invasive Plants Management Project is now available. The full DEIS and summary documents, along with background documents, are located on the internet at www.fs.fed.us/ri/clearwater. If you wish to receive a full hard copy DEIS or a CD version of the DEIS, please contact Chad Benson at (208) 942-3113 or e-mail cwhenson@fs.fed.us.

This DEIS is being proposed by the Bitterroot, Clearwater, and Nez Perce National Forests. The total project area is approximately 1,400,000 acres in size. The Selway Bitterroot Wilderness comprises 1,350,000 acres of the total. There is an additional 31,000 acres of Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) included (480 acres plus 30,402 acres, respectively from the Lolo Creek IRA and the Selway Bitterroot IRA). The primary objectives of this project are to prevent the establishment of new invasive plants and reduce the impacts of established invasive plants on native plant community stability, sustainability, and diversity in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. The project includes the use of herbicides, bio-control agents, and mechanical means to control invasive plants.

Based on the analysis presented in the DEIS, the preferred alternative is Alternative 5, because it best meets the purpose and need and addresses the issues considered in the analysis and applies integrated and adaptive approaches to reduce the effects of non-native invasive plant species on natural plant communities and ecosystems within the project area. Alternative 5 would allow the management of up to 4,125 acres per year using treatments of herbicides and mechanical methods and up to 50,000 acres of bio-control agents over the life of the project.

We invite your comments on this draft document within 45 days of the publication of the Notice of Availability on the *Federal Register* expected April 4, 2008. We encourage you to be as specific as possible with your comments. Your comments will be considered by the agency as it prepares the Final EIS.

Comments may be submitted in writing, or through electronic means. All comments must be postmarked by the Postal Service, e-mailed, or otherwise submitted by the end of the 45-day comment period. Hand delivered comments must be time and date imprinted at the Powell Ranger District office by 4:00pm (close of business) by the end of the 45-day comment period. Mailed comments can be sent to:

Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Invasive Plants Management Project

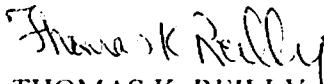
Attn: District Ranger
Powell Ranger Station
Lolo, MT 59847



Electronic comments may be submitted to comments-northern-clearwater-powell@fs.fed.us. The subject line must contain the name of the project for which you are submitting comments (i.e. Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Invasive Plants Management Project). Acceptable formats are MS Word, Word Perfect, or RTF. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

In submitting all comments, please provide: (1) your name, address, telephone number, and organization represented, if any; (2) title of the document on which the comment is being submitted; (3) specific facts along with supporting reasons that you believe should be considered; and (4) your signature. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project, and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision according to 36 CFR Part 215.

Sincerely,


THOMAS K. REILLY
Forest Supervisor